

South Korea as a tourism destination for Finnish travellers

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<p>The objective of this thesis was to define South Korea as a tourism destination for Finnish travellers. South Korea seems not to be a very popular destination compared to other Asia country for Finnish travellers. This even though Finnair operates daily straight flight to Seoul and there are many business relationships going on between Finland and South Korea. Therefore, the main target respondent of the thesis is Finnish travellers. Research result from Finnish respondents can give evaluation of South Korea tourism marketing and it will help to develop its industry.</p> <p>The theoretical framework was based on defining the concept of tourism; consumer behaviour in tourism, types of travellers, classifying destinations and image of destination.</p> <p>The survey research was conducted during January to March 2016. The survey was formed with mainly quantitative research method, but it included also open-end questions to supplement limitation of quantitative research method. The survey was published on the Webropol (an online survey program) and also face to face survey was conducted in Helsinki region. The total sample was 79.</p> <p>Respondents were asked to scale 11 different factors of South Korea and overall rate is quite good; potential tourist's expectation was 3,79 out of 5 and rate from travellers who have been to South Korea's was 3,78 out of 5.</p> <p>The results of the research show that South Korea's food culture, exotic culture, IT industry are well known to the Finnish travellers. However, the political issue with North Korea give negative impression to foreign travellers. Finnish travellers' image of South Korea as tourism destination is quite abstract. Except capital city Seoul, Finnish travellers do not know much about South Korea's tourism sights or products. Therefore, it is recommended to do more visualized marketing to offer specific and clear image of South Korea to attract more travellers. Prior to the marketing, of course it is recommended to develop more tourism products and sights to advertise.</p>	
Keywords South Korea tourism, Tourism destination, Finnish travellers	

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1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to define South Korea as a tourism destination for Finnish travellers. This year Stockmann had Korean food promotion on their Helsinki city centre department. South Korea has not been popular destination in Finland but it seems like Korea and its culture are slowly getting popular in Finland. It is important to know what kinds of the image Finnish travellers have about South Korea. Since it will help building effective marketing way of South Korea's tourism industry.

Finnair operates daily straight flights to Seoul and Helsinki. There are many Korean tourists who are visiting Helsinki every summer. However, it seems like Seoul and South Korea is not popular destination in Finland if compared with Japan and China. If Finnish travellers have not been South Korea, how many of them are willing to visit South Korea for leisure travel and what Finnish travellers expect from South Korea. It is important to know what kinds of image they have about South Korea and through which channel they have interested into travel destinations. If Finnish travellers have been to South Korea, it is important to know how was the travel experience and positive/negative factors of Korea's Tourism.

According to the research which was published by Statistics Finland, Finns made 8.1 million different abroad leisure travel in 2015. The number of leisure trips abroad, overnight in country of destination has continuously increased from 2005 to 2015. The favourite destination countries for Finnish residents are European countries such as Estonia, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Russia, Greece, Italy, Turkey and UK etc. The number of trips heading outside Europe increased in Asia. The United Arab Emirates become more popular than Thailand. (Statistics Finland, 2015)

Finland has small population and its travel market is not huge such as China. However, the image what Finnish travellers have about South Korea, can represent the Northern European traveller's. Besides every travellers from all around the world are important to Korean Tourism industry, since nowadays world is connected by Social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest etc. Writing a positive posting about destination on social networks, can bring hundreds of more travellers to destination. Therefore, Finnish travel market is even though small, but still it is important.

The commissioner of this thesis is 'Tour A' which is tour agency and association of guides in Korea. Company provides high-quality tour service to foreign travellers who are visiting

South Korea. As a commissioner, they are interested in image of Korea as a tourism destination in Finland. Furthermore, as a tour agency of South Korea, they are interested in improving positive image of South Korea to attract more foreign travellers. Commissioner strongly believe that the result of this thesis will help them to produce new tour products for their customers. The below is link of the 'Tour A' website. <http://www.koreatoura.com/>

Survey results have key of findings in this thesis. It will be very much empirical results made by Finnish respondents. South Korea's tourism industry have made a huge effort to develop, to attract foreign travellers, to produce positive image of Korea nation. Furthermore, its finding is important to thesis commissioner, since it is very active tour agency of South Korea tourism industry. Company is very deeply related with South Korea tourism. Company deals with foreign travellers daily, they do need to know what travellers expect, and what kinds of image travellers have about South Korea.

With the results of survey, analyse image of South Korea as tourism destination. Furthermore, what should be improved to attract more foreign travellers to South Korea.

2 Destinations and consumer behaviour

The aim of this thesis is to know about South Korea as a tourism destination to Finnish travellers. Prior to research, related theories should be reviewed. In this part, consumer behaviour in tourism, destination image will be discussed.

2.1 Consumer behaviour in Tourism

This section describes how motivation of consumer affects their behaviour and decisions in Tourism industry.

2.1.1 Motivation of Tourists

According to Ryan's(1991) analysis of tourist travel motivators, reasons why people travel to tourist destinations for holidays, are clearly listed. This explanation applies only for leisure travel.

- A desire to escape from a mundane environment
- The pursuit of relaxation and recuperation functions
- An opportunity for play
- The strengthening of family bonds
- Prestige, since different destinations can enable one to gain social enhancement among peers
- Social interaction
- Educational opportunities
- Wish fulfilment
- Shopping

(Page 2009, 94-95.)

Goodall (1991) identified the relationship between needs, wants and preferences and goals amongst travellers, where push and pull factors existed as shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 is focused on consumer behaviour and the role of marketing in providing the stimulation that cause people to choose specific motivations for going on holiday.

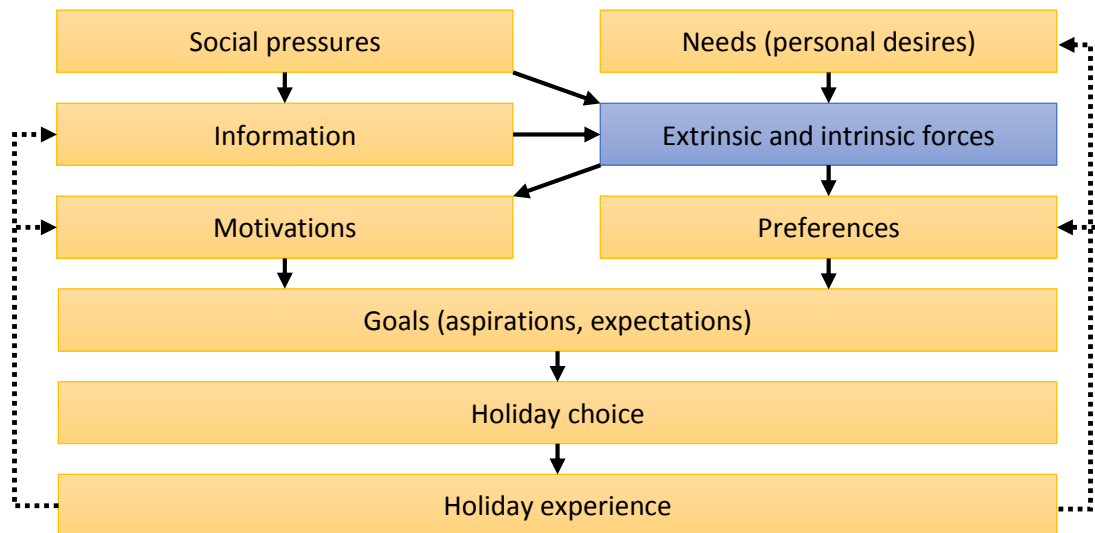


Figure 1: The relationship between needs, motivations, preferences and goals in individual holiday choice (Page 2009, 100.)

2.1.2 Factors for decision making process in Tourism

Stephen (2009) stated that consumer behaviour relates to the way tourists as purchasers of products and services behave in terms of spending, their attitudes and values towards what they buy. Their age, sex, marital status, educational background, amount of disposable income, where they live and other factors such as their interest in travel directly affect this. (Page 2009, 100.)

Purchasing a holiday product is not simple process. According to a study taken by TripAdvisor in Canada in 2002, consumers often take as long as a month to make decision of purchasing holiday product. In accordance with Stephen(2009), following factors are list, which affect to decision making of holiday product purchasing.

- The personality of the purchaser
- The point of purchase
- The role of the sales person
- Whether the individual is a frequent or infrequent purchaser of holiday products
- Prior experience

(Page 2009, 105.)

2.2 Types of travellers

On the basis of tourist motivation, Cohen(1974) classified four types of travellers.

1. *The organized mass tourist*, ready-made package holiday traveller who is highly organized and whose contact with the host community in a destination is minimal
2. *The individual mass tourist*, who use similar facilities with organized mass tourist, but also desires to visit other sights not covered on organized in the destination
3. *The explorers*, who arrange their travel independently and who wish to experience the social and cultural lifestyle of the destination
4. *The drifters*, who do not seek any contact with other tourists or their accommodation, wishing to live with the local community.

(Page 2009, 96-97.)

2.3 Classifying destinations

When it comes to the development of tourist activity, geography has an important role. People are spontaneously attracted to destinations with natural beauty such as the white sands of Florida, or the Austrian Alps. On the other hand, travellers are attracted to areas where developed entertainment factors such as Las Vegas has. Destinations with warm climate, such as the paradises of the Caribbean and the Canary islands off. Figure 2 explains many of the different types of popular tourist destinations that include attractions, entertainment, and all of the supporting facilities needed to draw and host visitors. It offers an easy approach to classifying these destinations based on seasonality and level of commercial development. As you can see from the figure, there are some overlap areas between groups. Six groups emerge when the primary influences of seasonal weather patterns and the level of investment in commercial facilities are taken in to account. These six groups are named:

- Far from the Maddening Crowd
- Links to the Past
- Seasonal Delights
- Spotlight on Sporting Activities
- Year-Round playgrounds
- Bright Lights and City Sights

Below figure 2 describes the each destination type's position with degree of seasonality and level of commercial development. (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 228-232)

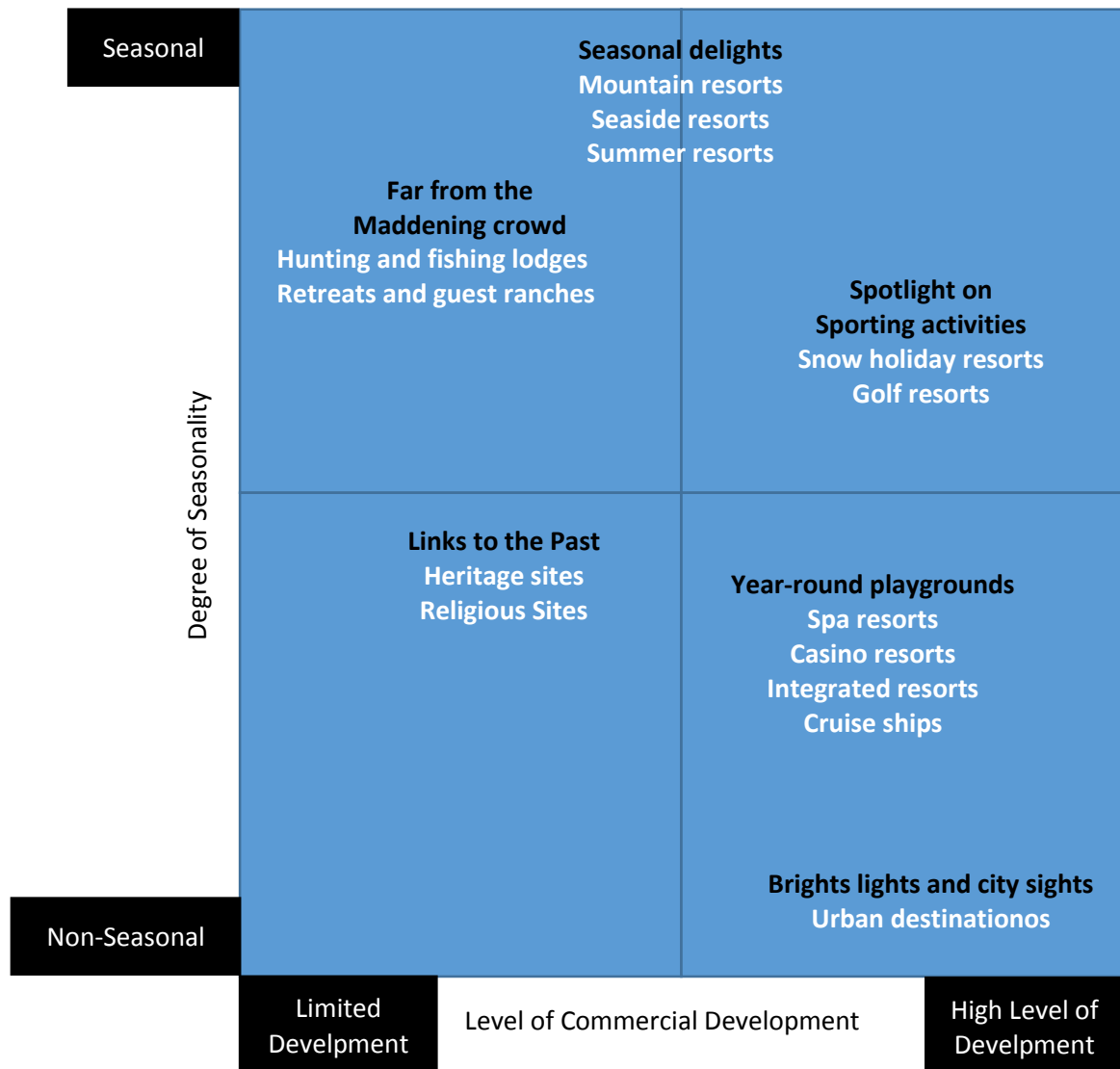


Figure 2: Tourism destinations (Cook, Yle and Marqua 2010, 231)

2.3.1 Far From the Maddening Crowd

It is found from the upper left-hand corner of Figure 2. It is significantly affected by changes in seasonal weather patterns, yet have little in the way of commercial development when compared with other destinations. There are two types of destinations in this classifications. One includes hunting and fishing lodges, and the other includes retreats and guest ranches. (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 232-233)

2.3.2 Links to the Past

It is found from the left-hand side of figure 2. Destinations of this classifications have been attracting travellers for hundreds, even thousands of years. Destinations in this category are religious and heritage sites. These area may or may not be affected by the seasons. Some are affected by religious holidays, for example the Vatican City at Easter. By definition, there is little, if any, recent commercial development at these sites, because they have been classified as heritage locations. (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 233.)

2.3.3 Seasonal Delights

This classification is found from middle of figure 2. These destinations are still affected to some degree by seasonal weather patterns but that also have a greater degree of commercial development. Destinations in this category are mountain, seaside, and summer resorts that have served through time traditional destination for holiday seeker. These resorts are located in different geographic areas but they offer one thing in common. It is escaping from summer's heat and a variety of warm weather recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, boating, golf, tennis and just lying in the sun. (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 233-234.)

2.3.4 Spotlight on Sporting Activities

This classification is found form upper right-hand corner of figure 2. Destinations of this group are not only affected by seasonal weather patterns, but also are highly developed with specific recreational activities such as skiing, golf, and tennis. In this category destinations share two things in common. First, they are affected by weather patterns and second, these destinations are easily identified by their high levels of commercial development, such as ski lift, golf courses etc. Examples of destinations are snow holiday resort, cruise ships, casino resorts and integrated resorts (also called four-season resort). (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 234-244)

2.3.5 Bright Lights and City Sights

The last group is located in the lower right-hand corner of figure 2. This category areas are urban areas that have developed into unique tourist destinations. Travellers do not consider all cities as tourism destination. It is strongly depends on the part of city plan-

ners, civic leaders, and business to attract and serve the needs of visitors. Tourists are attracted to city destinations because they are special places to visit and enjoy, and they offer a wide range of accommodations, attractions, entertainment, restaurants, lounges and other activities and amenities that tourists desire. (Cook, Yale and Marqua 2010, 245.)

2.4 Image of destinations

According to Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977) a destination image is 'the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts and individual or group might have of a particular place' (Jenkins 1999, 1). Since image of destination affects a lot when travellers making holiday purchase decision it is important to understand how the image is created. The factors influencing image creation are

- Perceptions
- Motivations
- Socio-economic characteristics (income, occupation, age etc.)
- Education
- Media (TV, newspaper, books, etc.)
- Tourist marketing
- Hearsay
- Experiences
- Psychological characteristics

(Jenkins 1999, 3)

The image of the place is a major factor in the decision to select a specific travel destination. For example London and Paris which have memorable elements in the city landscape, these offer a positive reason to travellers to visit the destination. These kinds of iconic features of a destination such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris secure usually popular, high-quality and safe travel. Besides, destinations must give effort to create an image to tourists which can distinguish between the competitions. Much of the image of a destination is not related to the tangible elements, because tourism industry is a complex of tangible perceptions of place and feelings about locations. Even though, a traveller has some reasonable and logical reasons for not visiting a destination, the personal desire of see something can outweigh the logical reason. (Stephen 2009, 108-110.)

3 South Korea as a tourism destination

This third chapter will explain about South Korea as a tourism destination. Its geographical information, history, culture, useful travelling information and main attractions of South Korea will be presented.

3.1 About South Korea

It is a North-East Asia nation neighbouring Japan to the east, China to the west, and sharing a northern border with Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). Population is 50.22 million and the size of the country is about 3 times smaller than Finland. It is a peninsula state surrounded by the ocean on three sides, and the only divided nation in the world. More than ten million tourists from abroad come to visit the country every year. (Imagine your Korea 2015a.) Split by a fearsome border, the Korean Peninsula offers the traveller a dazzling range of experiences, beautiful landscapes and 5000 years of culture and history. (Lonely planet 2016a.)



Figure 3. Map of South Korea (Geology 2008)

Korean is the official language of both South Korea and North Korea and about 80 million people speak Korean worldwide. Hangeul is Korea's official alphabet, was first invented by King Sejong during the Joseon Dynasty in the 15th century. The 'hunminjeongeum', a historical document which provides instructions to educate people on the use of Hangeul, is registered with UNESCO. (Imagine your Korea 2015b.)

A diverse array of food and dishes can be found throughout Korea. Korea was once primarily an agricultural nation, cultivating rice as their staple food since ancient times. These days Korean cuisine is characterized by a wide variety of meat and fish dishes along with wild greens and vegetables. Various fermented and preserved food, such as

kimchi and doenjang (soybean paste) are notable for their specific flavour and high nutritional value. The feature of a Korea table setting is that all dishes are served at the same time. (Imagine your Korea 2015c.)

3.2 Main attractions

Travellers can experience different type of travel destinations in Korea. There are huge cities, winter activity resorts, warm island resorts and historical places.

Seoul

Seoul is the capital of South Korea with over 600 years of history. It is the heart of Korea's culture and education as well as politics and economics. Seoul is home to many old historic sites like *Gyeongbokgung* and *Changdeokgung Palaces*, and places of traditional culture like *Bukchon Hanok Village*, *Insa-dong*, and *Namdaemun Market*. The shopping and entertainment districts of *Myeongdong* and *Apgujeong*, and Asia's largest underground shopping centre *COEX mall* also draw a large number of tourists every year. The *Hangang River*, which runs through the centre of the city, is also a distinctive landscape of Seoul that offers a myriad of resting areas for citizens. (Imagine your Korea 2015d.)

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

The *DMZ*, an area running between the borders of the two Koreas in which all military activity is forbidden, was established in 1953 during the Armistice Agreement. On the either side of the truce line is a 2km-wide stretch of land and the zone has been protected from human disturbance for about four decades and has become a haven for wildlife. The tourist destinations in this ecological area have been renamed as The Peace and Life Zone (PLZ). Some tourist sites in the area only available for sightseeing via a DMZ tour package offered by select travel agencies. There are attractions in DMZ such as *Nuri Peace Park*, *Dorasan Station* which is one of the northern most rail way station, *The 3rd Tunnel* which was dug by the Northern army to spy on the Republic of Korea. (Imagine your Korea 2015e.)

Gyeongju

Gyeongju was the capital city of ancient kingdom of *Silla*. The city is often referred to as a 'museum without walls' because of the many cultural relics scattered throughout the city. Almost everything in this city, from the streets to the mountains, is rich in history. *Gyeongju* has roughly 300 sites that have been designated as a cultural heritage, with some of the being UNESCO-recognized World Heritage Sites. (Imagine your Korea 2015f.)



Figure 4. Gyeongju's historical sites, Sinseonam (top), Anapji Pond (left), Bomunjeong (right). (Imagine your Korea 2015g)

Jeju Island

Jeju Island lies southwest of the Korean Peninsula and is the largest tourist destination in Korea. The whole island was designated as a special tourist zone, and wherever tourists go, they can look upon beautiful sceneries. The island has been received lots of love due to its mild and warm temperature experienced all year around. (Imagine your Korea 2015h.)



Figure 5. Seongsan Ilchulbong from Jeju Island (The Korea Herald 2011)

PyeongChang

PyeongChang is located in the mid-eastern part of Korea, where are blessed with beautiful mountains. Winter in *PyeongChang* is heaven for winter sports, as the province gets a lot of snow. Meanwhile, the 2018 Winter Olympics will be held in *PyeongChang*. (Imagine your Korea 2015i.)



Figure 6. Arieu Hills, at the top of Byeongbongsan Mountain (Pyeongchang's story 2015)

3.3 Travelling information

Korea has four seasons, with a wet monsoon/summer season in the middle of the year, and a cold winter from November to March. The ideal time to visit Korea is during the autumn months (September-November). During this time, country experiences warm, sunny weather. Winters are cold and dry and are a good time to visit if travellers are interested in winter sports. Spring (April-May) is also beautiful with all the cherry blossoms in bloom. However, it is very busy and one needs to book in advance to ensure accommodation is available. Summer months are muggy and hot, and rather crowded. (Imagine your Korea 2015j.)

From Helsinki, it is very easy to go to Korea. Finnair operates daily direct flights between Helsinki and Seoul. It takes about 8.5 hours to 9.5 hours. Price range is 500-800€ for a return ticket. The ticket price is depends on the season and the special offers of Finnair. Finnair often offers about 600€ ticket to Seoul during autumn, winter and spring season.

Public transportations in Seoul and other cities are very well planned and easy to use. When public transportation is difficult to use as foreigner taxi is good option. Taxi is very affordable compared to Finland. Start tariff is about 2.28€ and each 1km cost about 0.91€. (Numbeo 2016)

There are huge range of accommodation types in Korea from affordable guest house to luxury hotels. All international hotel chains are easily found in Seoul. The best way of finding accommodations is using hotel booking engines from Internet. Budget backpacker guesthouses cost around 25-30€. Economic hotels cost about 70-100€. 5 star hotels are about 150-200€. (Lonely planer 2016b.)

3.4 South Korea tourism

South Korea Tourism Organization has been built the brand image of Korea tourism. The brand identities are defined as a 'leader of popular culture' and a 'trendy and innovative' travel destination. Korean movies, TV soap operas and music are very popular in Asia. Korea pop music, so called K-pop is getting popular in Europe also. From this aspect 'leader of popular culture' identity was made. Second identity 'trendy and innovative' came from that Korea has been fast developed industrial country, but also Korean people love new fashions and new technologies. The brand slogan is 'Imagine Your Korea' Korea is full of cultural heritage sites, vibrant shopping districts and various cultural content that will satisfy all types of visitors from around the world. The slogan means, imaging your Korea, and experience the surprises that await you in a place that exceeds expectations. (Imagine your Korea 2015k.)

During 2014, total 14,201,517 travellers visited South Korea. The most travellers visited from China, about 43%. Secondly, Japanese travellers visiting percentage was 16%. Followings are America continent 6.8% and Europe 5.9%. Especially, 10,756 of Finnish travellers visited South Korea in 2014. Age groups of Finnish travellers between 21-30, 31-40 and 41-50 occupied about 20% each from total Finnish visitors. (Statistics Korea 2016.)

According to Roy's theory of classifying destination, Korea can be described as bright lights and city sight (urban destination), Spotlight on sporting activities (Snow holiday resort and golf resort), Seasonal delights and links to the past. Capital city, Seoul is full of shopping area with cultural contents with night life. There are many snow resorts and golf resorts in Korea and also 2018 winter Olympic will be held in Korea, in PyeongChang. The island of Jeju off the southern coast is the warmest place surrounded by cobalt blue sea. The island is seasonal delights destination which is full of summer activities, hiking route and horse riding. Especially city Gyeongju can be the links to the past destination. Since the city has roughly 300 sites that have been designated as a cultural heritage, with some of the being UNESCO-recognized World Heritage Sites.

4 Research method

This chapter will discuss the aim of the research, its planning process, methods of the whole research process and data collection. In addition data validity, reliability and objective will be given in the last part.

4.1 Survey research

According to Zikmund business research is the 'systemic and objective process of gathering, recording and analysing data for aid in making business decisions' (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 2).

There are three main styles of research in the social sciences that researchers in leisure and tourism can draw upon.

- Survey method
- Experimental method
- Ethnographic method

The survey requires a sample of respondents to reply to a number of questions that have been previously determined as relevant to the research. By using the same questions for the selected sample of respondents, individuals in the sample may be compared. Data may be collected through and interviewer/administered questionnaire or a self-completion questionnaire. Survey have the chief advantage of collection a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. The survey can be used deductively by testing hypotheses, or inductively by looking for patterns in the data. It is the most common type of research style used by researchers in leisure and tourism, and students undertaking their own research favour it. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 4.)

Quantitative research methods generally make it possible to gather a relatively large amount of information about the research subject, which may be individuals, places or organisations. The main method of the survey is quantitative approach to obtain numerical data of respondent's background information and image of South Korea. (Veal 2011, 34-35.)

Quantitative research has the following advantages over qualitative research in the leisure context:

- Leisure is a qualitative experience for the individual.
- The method 'brings people back in' to leisure research.

- The results of qualitative research are more understandable to people who are not statistically trained.

Therefore open-end questions are added on the survey to supplement weakness of quantitative research. (Veal 2011, 235).

By using survey as research method, it is easy to collect answers from respondents. Respondents do not have to spend much time and effort to answer it. Target respondents of the research are mainly Finnish travellers which are easily can be found around of research conductor. Therefore, it can be assumed that data collection would be processed easily. Another advantage is both of quantitative and qualitative answers could be collected. Image of South Korea as a tourism destination can be more clearly defined by both answers.

4.2 Planning of the survey

The quantitative survey aimed at study of Image of South Korea as a tourism destination in Finland. Since it was expected that most Finnish travellers has not been in South Korea, it also aimed at finding out what kinds of expectation and image Finnish travellers have about South Korea.

A questionnaire is a printed or electronic list of questions. The term questionnaire-based survey is used because such surveys can take two formats:

- Interview format, in which an interviewer, in a face-to-face situation or via telephone, reads out the questions from the questionnaire and records the answers.
- Respondent-completion format, in which the respondent reads the questions and write answers on the questionnaire or on-screen, and no interviewer is involved.

Questionnaire-based surveys are probably the most commonly used method in leisure and tourism research. Only respondent-completion format was taken for the survey method for this thesis. (Veal 2011, 126-127.)

4.2.1 Part one of the questionnaire

This first part includes several questions about respondent personal information. Such as gender, age, occupation, education level and nationality.

There are also questions to find out what kinds of travel types respondents prefer and the most preferable information channel for decision making of travel. Purpose of these two

questions are finding out what factors are affecting when Finnish travellers plan their holiday.

4.2.2 Part two of the questionnaire

In this part, respondents were asked to list 3 things that come to their mind when they think about South Korea. This questions was designed to supplement weakness of quantitative questions. It is complicated to analyse the results since many different answers came up. However, the answers shows what kinds of image or idea respondents have about South Korea. This part also aims at whether South Korea has positive image or negative image. By this, potential Finnish travellers to South Korea can be determined.

4.2.3 Part three of the questionnaire

In this section, respondents were asked to indicate the aspects of their previous visiting experience of South Korea destination by using the scale of 1-5. Respondents, who have not been to South Korea, were asked to indicate their expected image of South Korea as a destination by using the scale of 1-5. (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5= totally agree). Two questions are same format. 11 aspects of South Korea as tourism destination were listed such as accommodations, transportation, safety, cost/price level, Friendliness of local people, entertainment/activities, scenery/natural attractions, different culture, historical sights, shopping experiences and food culture.

By this questions, researcher could obtain numerical data how was the experience of previous travel of South Korea. Besides, another numerical data about image of South Korea can be obtained. The second data has importance because it presents marketing results of South Korean tourism industry. South Korean tourism organization and its industry have put a lot of effort to attract more travellers to nation. The result of the answers indicate how the marketing effort has been worked in the Finnish market. In addition, researcher could receive the data about strengths and weakness of South Korea as a tourism destination.

4.3 Data collection

Firstly, survey was conducted on the internet by Webropol program from January to March 2016. The survey link was posted on the Facebook, Haaga-Helia web sites. Also it was spread to Haaga-Helia faculty by e-mail. Totally 40 respondents have answered from on-line questionnaire.

The research was also conducted by printed version at Helsinki-Vantaa airport, Haaga-Helia Pasila campus and Helsinki Kamppi shopping centre during March 2016. Researcher could obtain 39 answers.

4.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability is about consistency of the results obtained from a measuring instrument in a piece of research. For example, if a measuring instrument is a questionnaire, then the answers from person should be same each time it is asked. A reliable question will be a simple, clearly worded question so that it occur same results from different occasions. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 28). The quantitative approach to research involves numerical data. It relies of numerical evidence to draw conclusions or to test hypotheses. To be sure of the reliability of the results it is often necessary to study relatively large numbers of people and to use computers to analyse the data. (Veal 2011, 34-35.)

Validity is the extent to which the information presented in the research truly reflects the phenomena which the researcher claims it reflects. External validity refers to generalizability or representativeness. This is depend on how the members of the sample are selected. Internal validity refers to how accurately the characteristics of the phenomena being studied are represented by the variables used and the data collected. (Veal 2011, 46.)

To improve the validity of the research researcher should be award:

- Approaching people who are employed in leisure and tourism industries for their professional advice
- Consulting with previous published research
- Using more than one method of data collection to triangulate the results
- Sound understanding of the theory underpinning the research

This research was reviewed by Eva Holmberg who is supervisor of this thesis. In addition, researcher have reviewed the previous published thesis and its research methods. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 29.)

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary rather competing approaches. Combination of approaches can improve the validity of the research. Therefore, this research used questions in the questionnaire of both quantitative and qualitative type. (Finn, Elliott-White and Walton 2000, 9.)

In this research, there are some factors affect the result of the survey. Some questions were designed to take only one option, but some respondents who completed it on printed-questionnaire took many options instead of one. Besides some respondents have not completed all questions. Second limitation is sampling group. The survey was published on the Internet so certain age group had difficulty of accessing the research. To supplement this limitation, printed-questionnaire was conducted at Helsinki-Vantaa airport and Kamppi shopping centre, still could not obtain enough answers from wide age group. Most respondents were 20s and 30s. Another limitation is language. Even though target group is Finnish people, questionnaire was written in English. Therefore questionnaire was designed only two pages with very simple and clear words.

5 Survey results

The results of the research are presented one by one in this chapter. Total 79 respondents were answered for the survey. 40 answers were collected from online, and 39 answers were collected by printed version.

5.1 General information

According to the survey, 42 respondents were female and 37 were male respondents. Percentages are 53.2% and 46.8% each. They were divided to six different age groups.

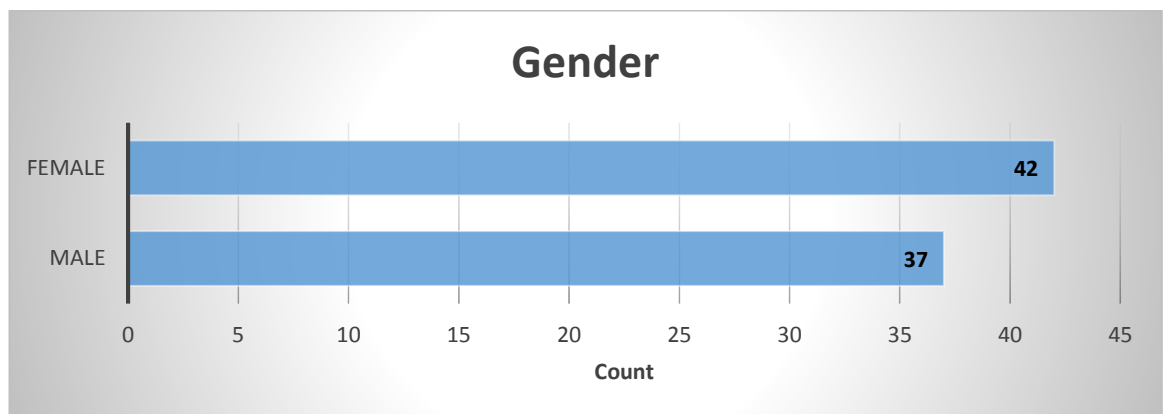


Figure 7. Respondents by gender (n=79)

Figure 8 shows that over half of respondents were belong to age group 20-29 years old (51.9%). Second biggest group is 30-39 years old with 21 respondents (26.6%). 13 respondents who are between 40-49 years old occupy 16.5%. Under 20 years old group and 50-59 age group both hold 2.5% by 2 respondents.

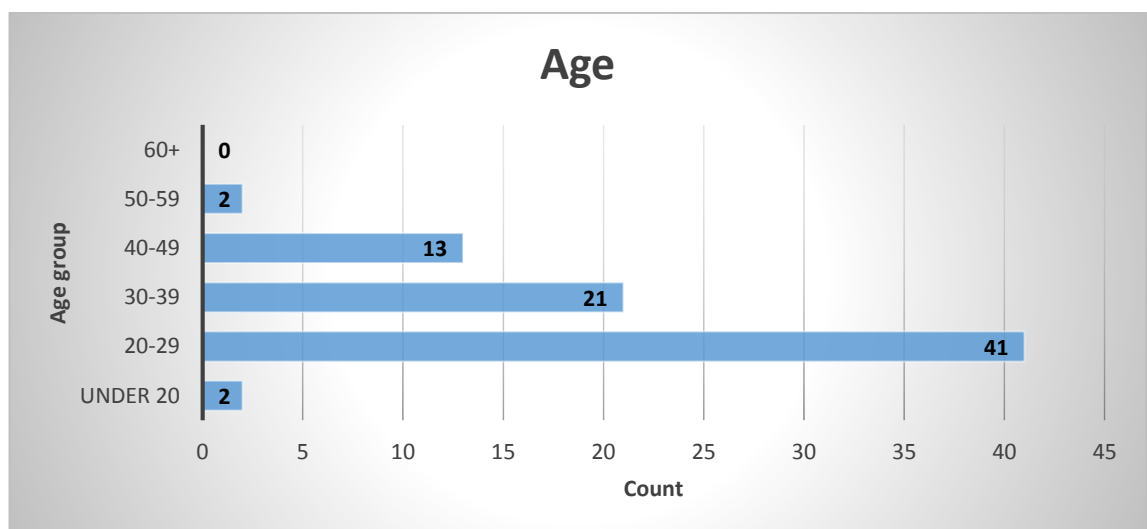


Figure 8. Age group of respondents (n=79)

According to the conducted study, the largest percentage of respondent is the student. Figure 9 shows that 36 respondents occupy 45.6% of total amount. After that 39.2% of respondents were employees. People who study and work at the same time hold 7.6% by 6 respondents. Finally, 6 of respondents were unemployed.

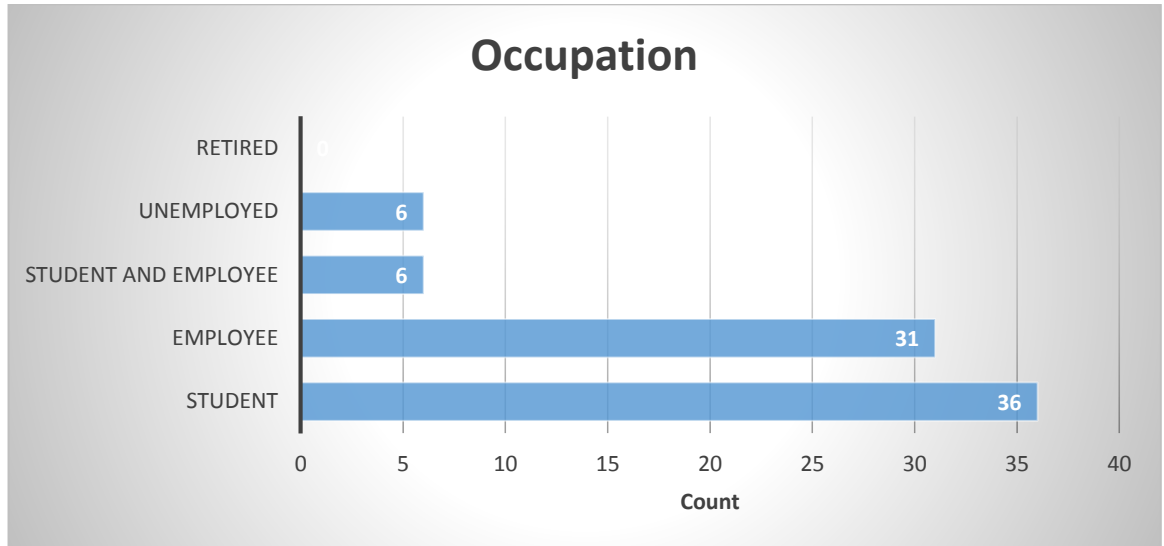


Figure 9. Occupation status of respondents (n=79)

Education level of the respondents is shown by figure 10. Around 50% of respondents have completed a bachelor degree. Respondents who have completed high-school education made up 25%. The group who have master degree hold 20.3% by 16 respondents. Only two respondents (2.53%) have a doctor degree and 1 respondent completed secondary school education.

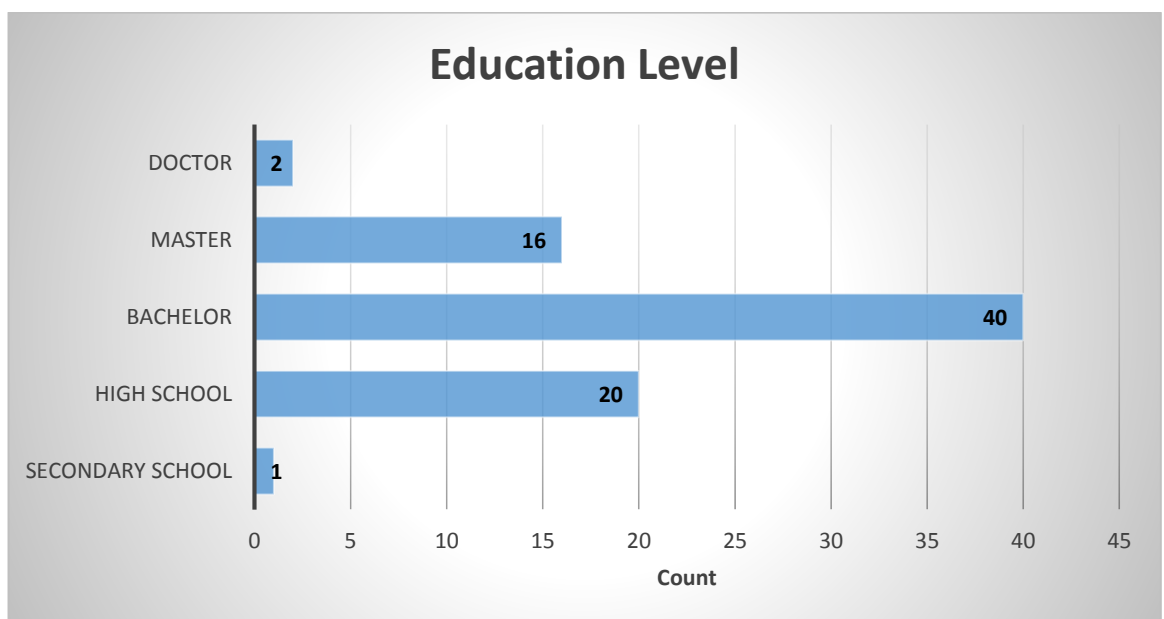


Figure 10. Education level of respondents (n=79)

As can be seen from figure 11, most of respondents were Finnish by 75%. Four Finnish respondents have two nationalities Finland/England, Finland/Australia, Finland/Austria. When these groups are considered as Finnish, the percentage rise to 83.5%. The target group of the study is Finnish traveller, the response gave quite reliable information on the opinion of respondents. Four respondents were Russian and two respondents were from China. There were one each respondent from France, Italy, Vietnam, Romania, Somalia and Sweden. One respondent did not mark nationality.

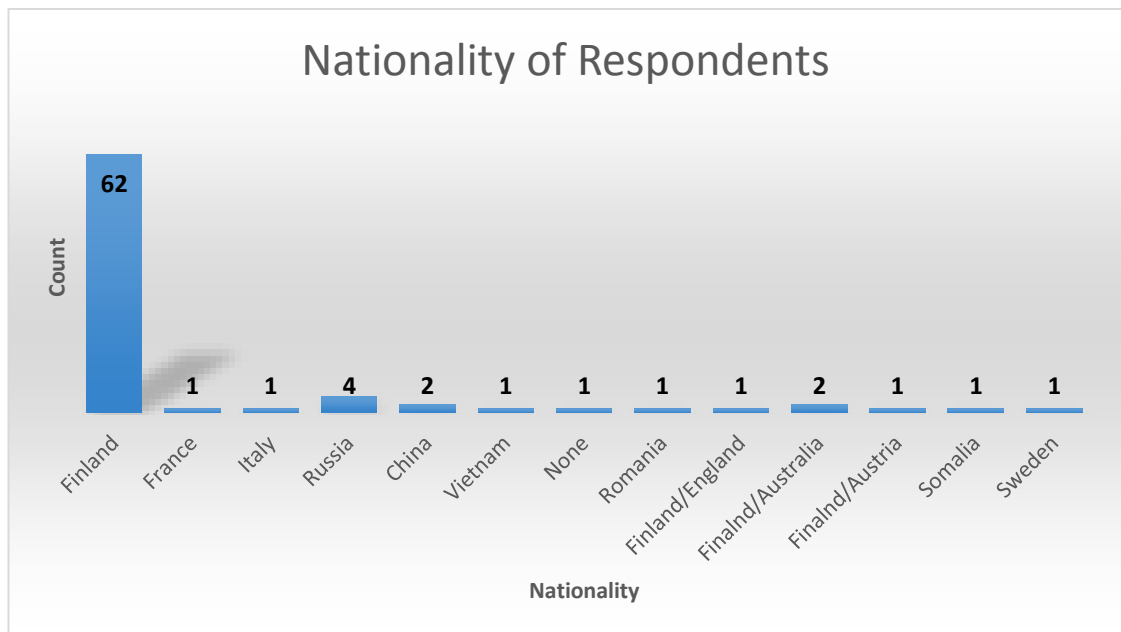


Figure 11. Nationalities of respondents (n=79)

5.2 Preferable travel types

The following question (displayed in figure 12) was asked to find out the respondent's travel habit and their travel type preferences. This answer can highlight which part of South Korean travel experiences should be advertised to Finnish travel market. The challenge for this question was that some respondents marked many options on the printed-survey form even though this question was designed to choose only one option.

The most preferable travel type is city break as 31(30.4%) and after that exotic new culture adventure as 27(26.5%) and relaxing beach holiday travel as 26(25.5%). Both sporting activity tourism and historic heritage tourism hold 9(9%) each. South Korea travel market can fulfil the needs of respondents. Since it has very different culture than Europe and there are warm tropical islands with beach resort. Also Seoul which is capital city of South Korea offers huge shopping opportunities.

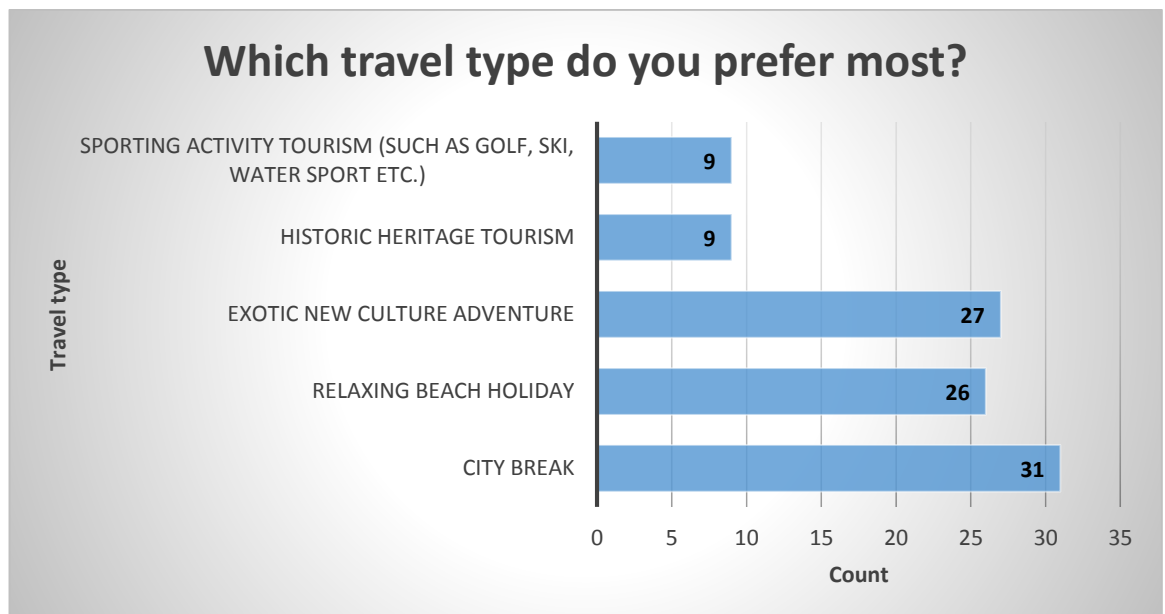


Figure 12. Preferable travel types of respondents (n=102)

5.3 Preferable information channel for travel planning

Figure 12 indicates the preferable information channel for travel planning of respondents. The aim of the question was to find out what is the most useful marketing channel for South Korea tourism industry. This question was also designed to mark only one option, but some respondents marked many options on the printed-form.

The most preferable channel is internet as 53 respondents (52.5%) marked on it. Secondly, advice from family and friends hold 22.8% with 23 answers. Traditional information channel such as travel guide books, advice from travel agency, newspaper/magazines and travel fair occupy quiet low figure as 6%, 4%, 4% and 2% each. 3 respondents marked on 'other, what?' option and only one respondents wrote that 'Momondo' which is online-based travel reservation system. The result shows that internet is the most effective marketing channel for target group.

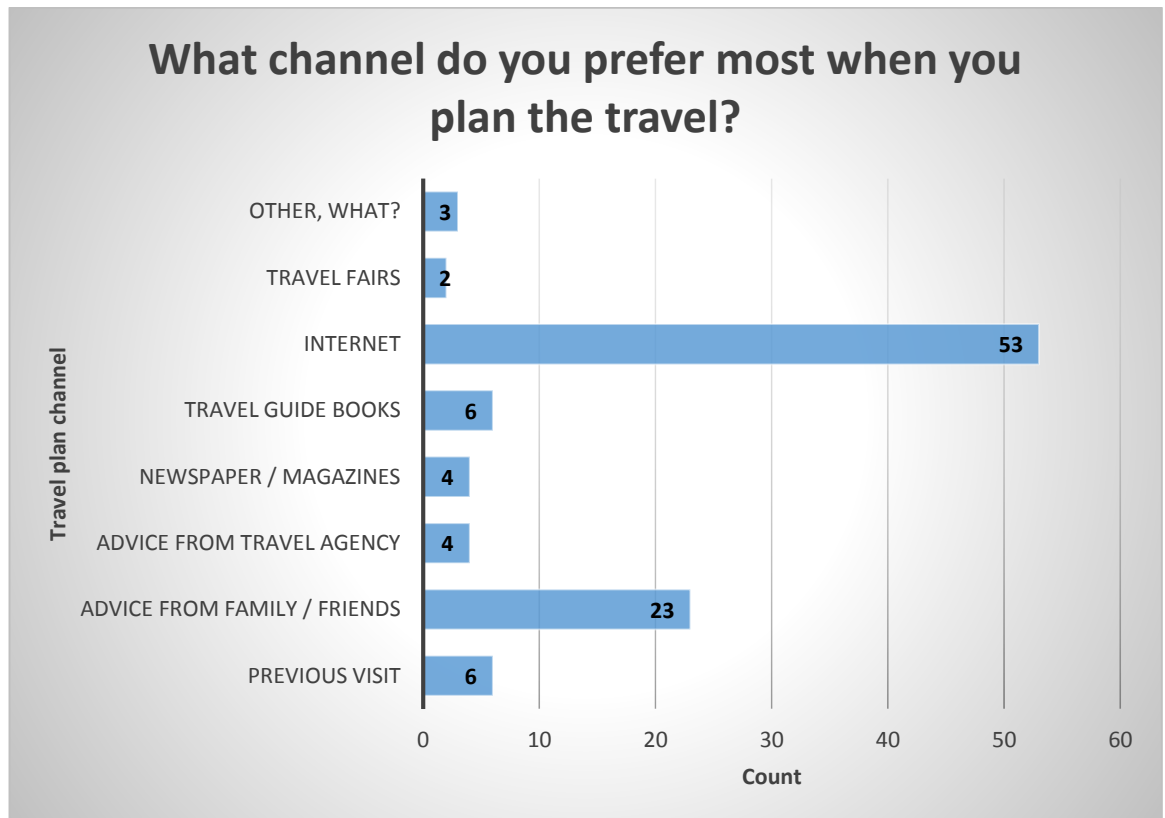


Figure 13. Preferable information channel for travel planning (n=101)

5.4 Image of South Korea

To know what kinds of image respondents have about South Korea, they were asked to list 3 things that come to their mind when they think about South Korea. The words can describe the image of destination. It was a complicated process to sort the same kinds of answers. The below table 1 shows the list of words and its count each.

The most thing came up to mind of respondents was about North Korea. It represents a quiet negative image of South Korea's political situation. It can give an impression that the country is not safe to travel. Secondly listed things were about Korea's food culture. It presents a quiet positive image that the country has interesting food culture. There were followed positive image words such as People (friendly, active, civilized, nice, smiling, happy), Exotic culture and K-pop/Korea's soap drama. There were words also about South Korea's technology and industry such as IT, Game industry, Samsung and Kia (Car manufacturing).

There were words representing the lacking of knowledge of South Korea tourism. Except Seoul, there was not much well-known tourism sights and tourism events. Some respondents had the misunderstanding of the weather that it is warm year-around. However, there is very clear four seasons in South Korea with flowery spring, hot summer, colourful autumn and cold winter with snow.

Table 1. Image of South Korea

Words	Count
North Korea, Kim jong-un, War, DMZ, Anime	26
Food (Kimchi)	24
IT/Technology/Robotics/Computers	20
Seoul	16
About people(friendly, active, civilized, nice, smiling, happy)	15
City, many people, crowd, hectic, massive	14
Exotic, culture, national costume	12
K-pop(PSY), Korea's soap drama	11
Asia, Asian culture	10
Samsung	8
Far away (geographically)	8
Spring, environment, nature, warm climate	7
Game industry	7
Car, Kia	4
Modern, fashion, future	4
Language, hand writing	3
Unknown	3
Beautiful women	3
My friend	2
Interesting country	2

Plastic surgery	2
Winter Olympic, Mud festival	2
Busan	2
History	2
Lotte	1
Kim as last name	1
Teacher education	1
The flag	1
Beautiful	1
Not as strict in politics	1
Colors	1
Cold weather	1
Poor	1
Mixture of old and new (e.g. buildings)	1
Alcohol	1
Tigers	1
Jungle	1
Rain	1
Ferry to Japan from Busan	1

5.5 Results from 9 respondents who have been to South Korea

As figure 15 shows that around 10% of respondents answered that they have been to South Korea.

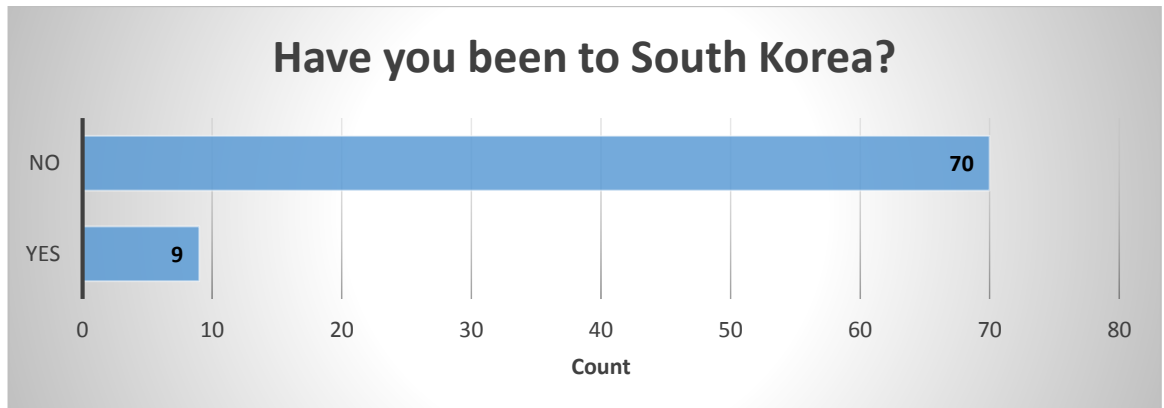


Figure 15. South Korea visiting experience (n=79)

Figure 16 shows that 5 respondents (56%) have visited once and 3 respondents (33%) have visited more than 3 times. Only one respondent marked 2 times option.



Figure 16. Visiting time of respondents who have been to South Korea (n=9)

Figure 17 indicates the purpose of the trip to South Korea. Respondents could marked more than one option. Holiday hold the biggest number as 4 (33%) and both family/friends visiting and others occupy 25% each. None of respondents who marked others option, write the specific purpose of the trip. 2 respondents have marked on business purpose. Actual respondents were 9, so 4 out of 9 have answered that holiday was also one of their visiting purpose.

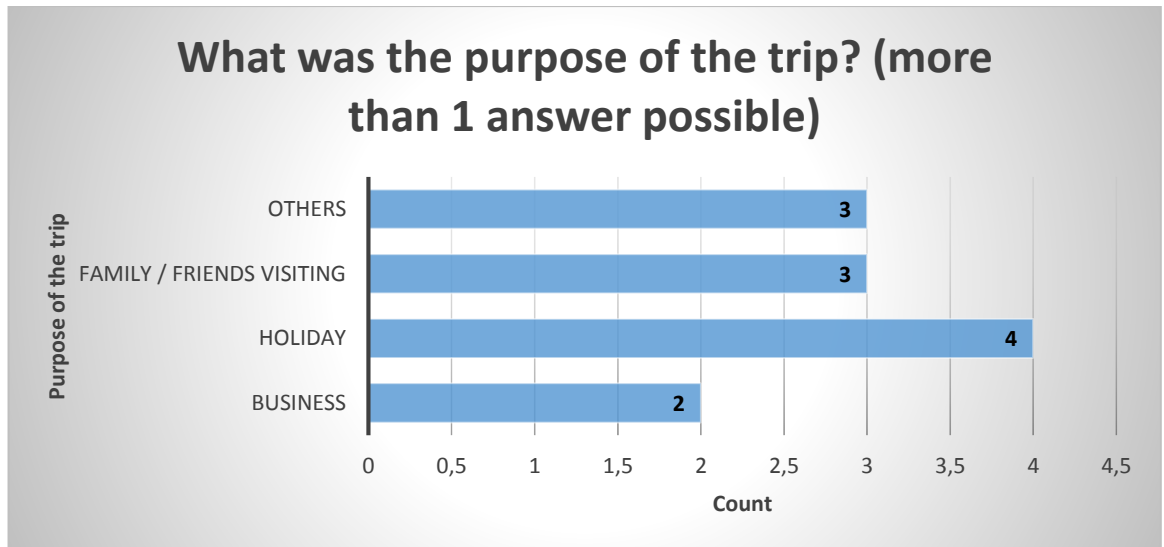


Figure 17. Purpose of the trip to South Korea (n=12)

In this research, respondents were asked to evaluate their previous travel to South Korea by using rating from 1-5 with one being the lowest and five highest grades. Table 2 indicates the respondent's satisfaction of previous visiting experience to South Korea by numerical data. In addition, the results shows the strengths and weakness of South Korea tourism industry.

Overall average score was 3,78 which is fairly near to question state 'I agree that South Korea offers excellent visiting experience'. Different culture factor marked the highest score as 4,22. Second highest score were occupied by safety and food culture factors by 4,11 each. Historical sight aspect also received quiet high score as 4. Score of transportation aspect was 3,89. Friendliness of local people and entertainment/activities aspect scored same as average as 3,78. Two aspects scored under the average. Accommodation and facilities scored 3,45. Lastly cost/price level had the lowest score as 2,89 which is quiet less than average. Many respondents might have expectation that cost level of Asia country is low. However, South Korea's cost/price level is quiet high. According to Destination travel, price index of Seoul is 58,1 while Asia's is 40,3. Europe continent price index is 69,2. (Destination Travel 2015)

Table 2. Experiences of South Korea from respondents who have been to South Korea

12. Please indicate the following aspects of your South Korea visiting experience by using the following scale of 1-5. South Korea offers excellent (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5= totally agree):							
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Totally agree	Total	Average
Accommodation and facilities	1	0	3	4	1	9	3,45
Transportation	1	0	1	4	3	9	3,89
Safety	1	0	0	4	4	9	4,11
Cost / price level	1	2	3	3	0	9	2,89
Friendliness of local people	1	0	2	3	3	9	3,78
Entertainment / activities	1	0	1	5	2	9	3,78
Scenery / natural attractions	1	1	2	2	3	9	3,56
Different culture	1	0	0	3	5	9	4,22
Historical sights	1	0	1	3	4	9	4,00
Shopping experiences	0	1	2	4	2	9	3,78
Food cultures	0	1	1	3	4	9	4,11
Total	9	5	16	38	31	99	3,78

5.6 Results from respondents who have not been to South Korea

This section will discuss about the results from respondents who have not been to South Korea. As above figure 14 displayed that 70 of respondents (88.6%) have not been to South Korea. 65 respondents(92.9%) answered that they would like to travel South Korea in the future. 7.2% of respondents marked that they would not travel to South Korea in the future. The reasons were

- *'no snow I think'*
- *'Too far away'*
- *'not really interested, because of North Korea'.*

In 2018 winter Olympic will be held in South Korea. The first reason shows that the event has not been properly advertised to travellers yet.

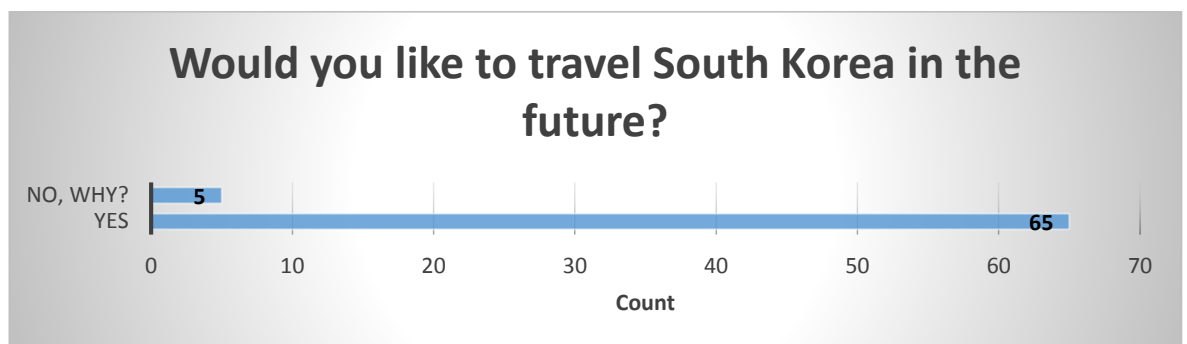


Figure 18. Willingness to travel South Korea of respondents who have not been to South Korea (n=70)

The respondents who have not been to South Korea were asked to indicate their expectation of South Korea's tourism aspects. The question was designed in the same way as table 1. The average score was 3,79 which is quiet same value with the result from respondents who have been to South Korea by 3,78. The highest score was given to different culture aspect by 4,35. The second highest score was given to food culture by 4,09. Friendliness of local people (3,94), shopping experiences (3,87), entertainment/activities(3,84) and transportation(3,81) aspects had higher number than the average. Accommodation and facilities aspect had slightly lower score than the average by 3,75. After that scenery/natural attractions, historical sights scored 3,77 and 3,66 each. Safety and cost/price level aspects had received low score by 3,37 and 3,28 each. It is interesting difference, while respondents who have been to

South Korea gave 4,11 score to safety aspect. The result shows that respondents have negative expectation about safety of South Korea which can be misunderstanding of country.

Table 3. Expected image of South Korea from respondents who have not been to South Korea

14. Please indicate the following aspects of (your expectation) image of South Korea as a destination by using the following scale of 1-5. South Korea as a destination offers excellent: (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5= totally agree):							
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Totally agree	Total	Average
Accommodation and facilities	0	1	24	35	9	69	3,75
Transportation	0	2	21	33	12	68	3,81
Safety	1	11	24	26	6	68	3,37
Cost / price level	0	15	24	26	4	69	3,28
Friendliness of local people	1	1	16	35	17	70	3,94
Entertainment / activities	1	1	21	31	15	69	3,84
Scenery / natural attractions	1	6	18	27	17	69	3,77
Different culture	1	2	6	23	37	69	4,35
Historical sights	2	9	16	27	16	70	3,66
Shopping experiences	1	3	22	22	22	70	3,87
Food cultures	1	5	12	21	31	70	4,09
Total	9	56	204	306	186	761	3,79

6 Conclusions

The aim of this research was to find out South Korea as a tourism destination to Finnish traveller. Furthermore to figure out effective way to attract more travellers to South Korea. In this part, to show the results of the survey research clearly, SWOT analysis tool is used. Furthermore, suggestion will be discussed.

Table 4. SWOT analysis

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food culture• Different new culture• Friendliness of local people	Weakness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High cost/price level• Far away• Lack of well known tourism sight
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2018 Winter Olympic• Good safety level	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political issue with North Korea

Food culture is one of the strength of South Korea. It has unique food culture and it is already well-known in Finland. Travellers who look for new experience and culture, South Korea is suitable destination. Many respondents of survey expected that people from South Korea are friendly and nice. South Korea has positive image on it. These 3 factors rated high number from result of survey and also many respondents listed these factors when they think about South Korea.

Many respondents expect that price level is not high in South Korea, but it is not true. High price level is the weakness of South Korea tourism. To Finnish travellers, South Korea is recognized as a country very far away geographically. However, Finnair operates daily straight flight to Seoul and it takes about 8-9 hours. In addition, Finnair often offers affordable deal to customer and it can connect many European cities to Seoul via Helsinki. Therefore, South Korea tourism board should co-operate with Finnair to bring more European travellers to South Korea by Finnair. Another weakness is lacking of famous tourism sights/events. Seoul is the only one place where respondents know about South Korea as a tourism destination. There are beautiful islands, festivals what travellers could be interested at. Those tourism sights and festivals should be developed more and advertised properly.

A good opportunity is that 2018 Winter Olympic will be hold at South Korea. South Korea Olympic organization is working hardly to promote it. Many visitors will visit South Korea

and it will be exposed to all over the world by media. It is good chance to improve image of country and attract more foreign visitors. In addition, country has good safety level. The result from respondents who have been to South Korea gave rate 4,11 while respondents who never been to South Korea gave 3,37. Therefore, to attract potential travellers, it is important to give impression that South Korea is safe to travel.

The political issue with North Korea is a threat for South Korea tourism. It gives negative impression to travellers. However, because of this political issue, there are some interesting tourism sights in South Korea. DMZ is border between South and North Korea where travellers can visit. It can be interesting and unique experience for travellers.

Overall, South Korea is a not well-known destination for Finnish travellers. According to Cook's tourist destination theory in chapter 2, there are bright lights and city sights destinations such as Seoul, spotlight on sporting activities destinations such as snow holiday resorts during winter season, warm islands resorts with beautiful scenery in South Korea. Due to unique political situation with North Korea, it can offer unique experience to visit border between North and South Korea. In addition, unique food culture and its language can make exotic mood to travellers.

When it comes to define the Finnish travellers, they are mostly 'The individual mass tourist' according to Cohen's theory in chapter 2. Since their preferable information channel for holiday decision making are internet and advice from family/friends. They are ready to go for exotic adventure holiday. Most preferable travel types of Finnish travellers were city break, exotic new culture adventure and relaxing beach holiday. South Korea can satisfy the needs of Finnish travellers. There are resources in the country. It just have to be developed and advertised. As a research conductor, I felt that country is known mostly by other issues than tourism aspects, such as political issue, electric/car industry etc. Tourism aspect images such as its culture, nature, historical sites and festivals are not well known in Finland. Finnish respondents have very abstract image only.

It is important to have concrete and a clear image as a destination to attract more travellers. Therefore, visualized marketing with Finnair can be win-win solution. Most of people in Finland are exposed to Finnair marketing by internet, TV and from street. Especially by visualized material such as short video or picture through internet channel, travellers can have specific image or idea about South Korea. Through this South Korea marketing campaign, Finnair can get more customers to Seoul flights and South Korea can attract more visitors to the country, so it has good synergy to both organizations.

Prior to the marketing strategy, of course more tourism sights, products should be developed. For example, 'Muds festival' is hold every summer on the west coast of South Korea. Cherry blossom festival is hold every spring in all around South Korea. If these festivals are more developed, they can attract more travellers.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Background information

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age ☐ under 20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39
 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60+
3. Occupation ☐ Student ☐ Employee ☐ Unemployed
 ☐ Retired
4. Education level ☐ Secondary School ☐ High School
 ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master
 ☐ Doctor
5. Nationality

6. Which travel type do you prefer most?
- ☐ City break
 - ☐ Relaxing beach holiday
 - ☐ Exotic new culture adventure
 - ☐ Historic heritage tourism
 - ☐ Sporting activity tourism (such as Golf, Ski, water sport etc.)

7. What channel do you prefer most when you plan the travel?
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel guide books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from family / friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from travel agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel fairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper / Magazines | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, what? | |

8. Please list 3 things that come to your mind when you think about South Korea.
- 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

9. Have you been to South Korea?
- ☐ Yes (please answer to questions 10, 11, 12)
- ☐ No (please answer to questions 13, 14)

10. How many times have you visited South Korea?
- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3
- ☐ more than 3 times

11. What was the purpose of the trip? (More than 1 answers possible)

- ☐ Business ☐ Holiday ☐ Family / friends visiting
☐ Others _____

12. Please indicate the following aspects of **your South Korea visiting experience** by using the following scale of 1-5. South Korea offers excellent (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5= totally agree):

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Totally agree
Accommodation and facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Cost / price level	1	2	3	4	5
Friendliness of local people	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment / activities	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery / natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Different culture	1	2	3	4	5
Historical sights	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping experiences	1	2	3	4	5
Food culture	1	2	3	4	5

13. Would you like to travel South Korea in the future?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No, why? _____

14. Please indicate the following aspects of **(your expectation) image of South Korea as a destination** by using the following scale of 1-5. South Korea as a destination offers excellent: (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5= totally agree):

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Totally agree
Accommodation and facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Cost / price level	1	2	3	4	5
Friendliness of local people	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment / activities	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery / natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Different culture	1	2	3	4	5
Historical sights	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping experiences	1	2	3	4	5
Food culture	1	2	3	4	5